

HACKNEY HECKLER

FREE

TAKING THINGS ONE STEP FURTHER

ISSUE No. 1 MARCH 1990

POLL TAX IN CRISIS!

April's Fool Day is when the Poll Tax bills come thudding through the letter boxes in Hackney. What the government doesn't realise is that the laugh will be on them as all over the borough thousands of people are already pledging not to pay the Poll Tax. In some areas the figure is as high as 65% in support of non-payment. In Hackney there are some 25 anti-Poll Tax groups set up to spread the word that the Poll Tax isn't welcome here, and to encourage mass non-payment. They have been active having regular street stalls, holding public meetings and door to door calling to make sure people aren't left isolated in their stand against the hated Tax.

There's also been successful pickets and leafletting of the Poll Tax and unemployment offices to show workers there that the community will back any stand they are able to make against the Tax.

When Hackney Council sent out its army of snoopers to intimidate people into registering, the harassment and opposition they were met with forced the council to back down and not issue any fines for those not registered. Not only were the snoopers met with hostile crowds but on a number of occasions had their files confiscated and were escorted off estates! No wonder they're having difficulty in getting our names.

In November Tory Minister Christopher Chope thought he would brave the odds and visit Hackney Town Hall to quieten fears among top businessmen about the effects of the



THEIR CHARGE OR OURS?

Poll Tax. He was met with the reception he deserved: an angry group of protestors managed to dodge security precautions and storm the public gallery in the middle of his speech. A flour bomb sailed across the chamber and exploded above his head engulfing him in a cloud of flour. That he met in Hackney Town Hall was no surprise as so far the council's response to the Tax has been predictable.

There has hardly been a murmur of protest other than complaining to the government about what an unfair position they've been put in as the people who have to implement and collect the Tax. Their opposition amounts to showing the Poll Tax in their "information campaign" as a dark cloud ready to engulf us all. The reality is far from this with people knowing that this time Thatcher and her cronies have gone one step too far. This time they're not taking on isolated groups of people but the whole working

class on mass! This is where our strength lies. A mass campaign of non-payment which will **strangle the Poll Tax and its supporters** before it has a chance of getting off the ground.

This has shown itself to be the way in Scotland where, with the Poll Tax being introduced a year earlier than in England and Wales, mass non-payment is a growing reality. In some areas such as Glasgow 1 in 3 haven't paid a penny! Despite all the intimidation and threats that the government and councils have thrown at people, the level of non-payment **has grown** in the last nine months. This means that there is well over a million people not paying the Poll Tax in Scotland. If the same figures were applied to England and Wales, there would be well over ten million non-payers nationally.

**WE ARE MANY
THEY ARE FEW
WE'RE GOING TO WIN**

War against single parents.

The latest government attack on ordinary people is the plan to enforce fathers to pay maintenance for their children. The reasoning behind this is to cut the amount of money paid out in social security to single parent families.

At present single unmarried mothers face some scrutiny regarding the father of their child. Under a new system which is being investigated, the courts could force men who are 'suspected' of being fathers to take blood and genetic tests. This is part of an American scheme which Tony Newton, the Social Security minister, is studying which may be copied or adapted for use in Britain.

American women who refuse to be intimidated by paternity investigators are having their benefit stopped. When forced to comply they face

rigid questioning about their personal lives in order to justify the pathetic poverty inducing payments. If this system is adopted, fathers may have their wages docked. Whilst



women left with children need a way to ensure they are paid maintenance, the judges and courts who set the rates have no idea of the hardships often faced by both parties. Although the government seeks sympathy for single mothers, they are in fact only making savings which benefit the rich and ruling class.

"TRAINING"

British bosses are so impressed by the highly skilled workers the government's E.T. programme is turning out, that the CBI, the employers' federation, has convinced the government to extend the scheme. The new change, expected sometime around October, will mean that the maximum length of 'training' will be extended to 2 years. The present system of a minimum of 20% off the job will be abolished; ie it will be a 100% 'work experience' for 2 years for £10 a week. No wonder the bosses like it so much!

STUFF IT

Here comes the Poll Tax and we're getting ready for it. As they say in Scotland, one million Scots can't be wrong. On Saturday 31st March there is a massive demonstration against the Poll Tax: meet Kennington Park (SE11), 12 noon. Don't miss it! And on Monday 2nd April there is a lobby of the local Poll Tax office at Stoke Newington Town Hall (Stoke Newington Church St) from 12 to 2.

WHITEWASH

Hackney Council's latest scheme is to paint the Town Hall...with money supposed to be spent on our estates! No wonder our estates are such dumps. Hackney Tenants' Fed Chair, Terry Edwards, said "It's bloody madness". We couldn't agree more...

DAYS QUOTE

"I've been mucked about all my life and I'm sick of it...I've no chance of paying the Poll Tax...they can threaten me and do whatever they like but there's one thing they can't try and that's take away my dog Jamie". Nellie Freshwater, 69 year old pensioner against the Poll Tax.

Victory!

On Monday 22nd January Glenford Lewis appeared at Snaresbrook Crown Court and was told that he could go free. He had been charged with possession of cocaine. But the charge was nothing more than a total frame-up. No drugs were found on him and there was no forensic evidence.

The police claimed that the case could not go ahead because one officer was too ill to turn up. But this was really because they knew that their case was too weak to stand up in court.

The impact of the charge on Glenford Lewis has been enormous. When he was arrested, he was savagely beaten up in the back of a police van and he is lost work since the arrest. As he said: "I feel really bad about this whole thing. I've twice lost a job over this - it has cost me a lot".

There have been many cases of fabricated evidence and beatings by the Hackney police. They seem to think they can get away with anything. But Glenford Lewis has shown that we don't have to be intimidated and that we can defeat them when they step out of line. Glenford Lewis now plans to sue the police for wrongful and malicious arrest. Many other people have taken the police to court and won.

The crucial thing is not to be intimidated by the police. As this case shows, they aren't invincible and can be defeated. Don't let them grind us down.

If you want more information about the case, contact Hackney Community Defence Association, 50 Rectory Road, N16.

Know your rights Domestic violence.

'Domestic violence' is a general term that can mean physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse. Women's experiences are usually a mixture of all three. A lot of men use humiliation, threats and/or force to control the women and children they have access to.

Women from every class, race and religion are abused. The first step in dealing with it is to recognise it for what it is and stop denying or downplaying it. The abusive man is responsible for the abuse. It is not a woman's fault, despite unhelpful myths and stereotypes to the contrary. You have the right to live free of fear, threat or abuse. These are some organisations who will help you if you need it:

London Women's Aid: 251 6537 (24 hours, answer machine with emergency numbers outside office hours). They

will give you details of refuge space including refuges for Asian, Afro-Caribbean and Latin American women. They will also put you in touch with someone sympathetic and knowledgeable to talk to if that's what is needed.

Rights of Women 251 6577/6575 (24 hours, answer machine at night). Will put you in touch with experienced, sympathetic local solicitors, offer legal advice sessions and give advice about Legal Aid, injunctions, custody and immigration laws.

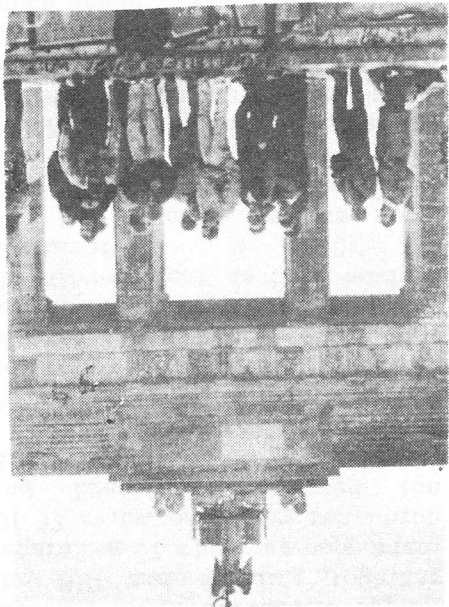
London Rape Crisis 837 1600 (24 hours). Phone counselling, advice and support.

The following numbers may be useful, but are not run solely by women:

Hackney Council Housing Department emergency number 533 3244.

Emergency DSS 986 3266/6428/6251.

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS HAPPENING?



Cracks in Eastern Europe shatter the Berlin Wall

Ordinary people can change things - if they get together.

However, as the dust begins to settle, there is much talk of democracy and the free market in the countries swept by revolution. So what is the reality of Eastern Europe? In Poland there is a massive escalation of the price of basic goods. Solidarnosc declared that living standards must be reduced by 20% in 1990. On top of this, mass unemployment looks set to follow, as 1/3 of all workers will be made redundant if all "non profitable" (sound familiar?) companies are forced to close, according to the Solidarnosc government. With the government's ban on strikes any people are not powerless.

RENT RISE SHOCKER

Council rents are due to increase by up to £22 a week in April. This massive increase has been caused both by government cuts and changes in the council's housing policy. Over 3,000 tenants face increases of more than £10 a week. Overall, the average increase is £5.23 a week. But Hackney Mayor Peggy Edwards said, "We shouldn't increase rents when we're providing such a poor service." Yet Hackney Council has never listened to anything.

1989 saw massive changes in Eastern Europe. Elections in Poland saw communist leader in 40 years. In Hungary the communist party gave up its constitutional right to power. In Czechoslovakia a general strike brought down the government. In East Germany mass demonstrations toppled the government and the Berlin Wall. In Romania, bloody insurrection ended Europe's most repressive dictatorship.

The most amazing feature of this series of events has been its speed. But the process has been developing over a number of years, as the old leaders became increasingly unable to cope with the world recession.

The strikes and demonstrations in Poland in 1980-81 were the forerunners of today's movements. It was the massive strike wave in Poland in 1988 that forced the first retreat by the old regimes, the seeming collapse of government and promise of free elections.

and demonstrations, for the people of Poland the only thing that's changed is the government! In Romania there is a government ban on impromptu meetings and demonstrations. But the people who made the revolutions are showing signs of dissatisfaction with this situation. Romania sees repeated demonstrations against the government. In Poland strikes and protests are continuing. And in East Germany, elections have been brought forward for fear of the country being made ungovernable. Its leader, Hans Modrow, is warning of the dangers of demonstrations and the disruption of the work process. He fears that the measures needed to 'transform' the regime will provoke a backlash that cannot be controlled.

The only thing certain is that the power of the people will have an important part to play. As the recession deepens and people everywhere start to fight back, the power of the people can bring about change, both east and west. But, as the people in Eastern Europe are finding out, a change in government is not necessarily a change of life. This can only be guaranteed if we by-pass governments altogether and bring about change ourselves.

Power to the people!

'Hackney Hecker' is a free news-sheet produced by people living and working in Hackney. We welcome contributions, donations, reports, help with distribution. What's happening is corrupt? Write to us at 'Hackney Hecker, c/o Hackney Solidarity Group, 61 Leswin Rd, N16. We plan to bring out the Hecker once every two months: next issue May.

TORIES STUFFED 5-0!!

Football fans all over the country were delighted with the resounding defeat of the Tories madcap ID card scheme. Despite a strong first half performance where Thatcher attempted to rout the working class with her forwards, the state, police and media, a strong second half comeback by football fans saw the true blues wide open defence crumble.

1-0: despite employing Tory Judge Taylor to "fix" the report he couldn't even give the ill-thought scheme the thumbs up.

2-0: pet hamster and hockey hooligan Colin Moynihan was totally crap. It became obvious that he knew F.A. about football and we're not talking about the Cup.

3-0: Dutch fans showed the way when an attempt to introduce the scheme there ended in riots and the schemes' withdrawal.

4-0: football fans organised themselves superbly, putting pressure on their clubs to oppose the Bill and standing together regardless of who they supported. Of 92 clubs, only Tory run Luton and Brentford supported the Bill.

5-0: pressure from the Police worried about crowd control and Football Directors worried about the cost of it proved to be an own-goal for the Government as both advised against it.

On a more serious note, the Taylor Report admitted that the kind of crowd bottleneck which led to the Hillsborough disaster would have been made much more likely by an I.D. Card scheme, with fans taking much longer to enter the stadium.

The Bill was defeated because fans everywhere were sick of their game being used as a scapegoat for all the System's

failings. Football hooliganism is greatly exaggerated, for the most part taking place away from the grounds with rival "firms" out to "do" each other. The ordinary fan has more chance of being beaten up by the Police who use soccer as a training ground for crowd control.

The Judges report recommended all-seater stadiums; this must be resisted, they're **our** clubs and we can stand if **we** want to. One thing the Judge did get right was slamming the Boards of Directors who infest the game; so lets make the I.D. victory a start and kick them out, taking control of our clubs ourselves: we could give the Luxury Boxes to O.A.P.'s and disabled fans. Now we've stuffed Thatcher, lets sack the Board - forever!!

-Here We Go-

THE ADVENTURES OF TINTIN in **BREAKING FREE**



If you can't wait for the next installment of Tintin's adventures, send £2 to Attack International (BM 6577, London, WC1N 3XX) for the full-length cartoon book "Breaking Free".